



Safe Ministry Policy

DOCUMENT NUMBER	SM001
TYPE	Policy
SUBJECT	Safe Ministry Policy
AUTHORISED BY	Diocesan Council in accordance with Part 3 of the Professional Standards Ordinance 2017.
DATE AUTHORISED	5 th November 2022 active immediately

Scope

This Policy and related Safe Ministry protocols and Diocesan Code of Conduct are underpinned by Jesus Christ's words: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39). Further, the Bible identifies classes of vulnerable people who are to be protected and given special care and treatment in society because of their relative lack of power such as the poor, widows, orphans, and aliens (Exodus 22:21-22, Deuteronomy 10:17-19, Jeremiah 22:2-4, James 1:27). Jesus' commands guide our behaviour in our relationships and provide the basis for the establishment and exercise of safe activities and events that are run in abuse-free Christian communities.

Based on the above biblical mandate and to meet our legal obligations the scope of our Safe Ministry policy is all people associated with the Diocese, including children (0-17ys of age) and vulnerable adults. It applies to all Parishes, Ministry Units, entities, and all clergy and church workers (paid and voluntary, licensed and unlicensed) whose ministry is associated with the ministry of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Northern Territory (including as specified all those in attendance in ministry programs, visitors to our parishes and contractors), with the exception of Anglicare NT and Nungalinya College. These organisations have their own safety policies and protocols as approved by their respective boards. It is to be read with and implemented through the Diocesan Safe Ministry Protocols. Unless otherwise stated herein, the definitions and terminology in this Policy are those as found in our Diocesan code of conduct - Faithfulness in Service.

Commitment to Safe Ministry

We affirm that all people associated with the Diocese have the right to feel and be safe, spiritually, emotionally, and physically, and as such we are committed to zero tolerance for all forms of abuse.

We are committed to safe places for ministry by:

- being faithful to the teaching in scripture:
- fostering relationships between members, and people in the wider community, establishing and maintaining guidelines and processes to minimise the risk of harm and abuse, ministry misconduct, and the misuse of positional power;

- providing responsible and loving Christian leadership and management practices, based on the teachings of Scripture;
- ensuring that cases of alleged abuse, ministry misconduct and grievances are handled in a consistent, transparent, fair and just manner (also known as procedural fairness) and that these processes are child-focused when involving children and young people;
- acknowledging the need for sensitivity and special consideration of people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as any person with a disability.

The Diocese is committed to thorough and effective governance and organisational leadership for the continuing development of an organisational culture that promotes Safe Ministry to children and vulnerable people. The Diocese continues to implement recommendations from the Anglican General Synod in relation to safe ministry as underpinned by the Diocesan Code of Conduct: *Faithfulness in Service*.

The Diocese is committed to ensuring that the collection, storage, access to, and sharing of information is consistent with the Diocesan privacy policy.

Policy Statements

The Diocese commits to:

1) Ensuring that all those who serve as church workers:

a) have been appropriately screened.

- before being appointed, all clergy and church workers will be screened to ensure they are suitable for ministry positions with children, young, and vulnerable people by following *SM002 Safe Ministry Screening Protocol*.

b) are trained in the concepts of Safe Ministry (including child protection).

- All clergy and church workers must regularly undertake approved Safe Ministry Training specified in *SM002 Safe Ministry Screening Protocol* so they are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children, young people, and vulnerable people safe.
- Safe Ministry Course 3 (Safe Ministry Implementation) is available face to face and via video conference and is mandatory every three years for Rectors, PSMA's, DSMO, members of Diocesan Council and Bishops. Course 3 is strongly advised for members of Parish Council and MDT members.

c) receive continued support and supervision.

- All clergy and church workers must receive supervision and support in their ministries with regard to reflecting values for safe practices with children, young people and vulnerable people.
- All clergy and church workers must comply with the Diocesan Code of Conduct: *Faithfulness in Service*.
- All clergy and church workers must comply with all relevant canons, ordinances, policies and protocols.

2) Ensuring physical and online environments are safe.

- The ideas and feelings of program participants, including children and their families, are valued through encouraging input into the programs and activities in which they participate, and to exercise their freedom to decline participation in any part of a program.
- Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for harm.
- All clergy and church workers take all reasonable and practical steps to minimise risks of physical and psychological harm, and care for their own health and the health of others involved in ministry;
- Parish Councils together with ministry leaders are responsible for:
 - o meeting the requirements of the Diocese's [WHS002 Work Health & Safety Policy](#);
 - o implementing safe ministry practices according to the Diocese's ordinance, policies and protocols;
 - o Implementation of a Parish Safe Ministry action plan, and an annual review, based on the Diocesan template.
 - o Communicating their action plan and requirements of Safe Ministry Policy and Protocols in their parish. The Diocesan office is responsible for: up-to-date Church Worker risk assessment records; in accordance with SM002.
 - o maintaining a register of the Anglican Diocese of the Northern Territory's legal obligations for Safe Ministry and workplace health and safety;
 - o implementing policies, procedures and systems that provide controls to reduce the likelihood and consequence of incidents;
 - o having an incident response plan for safety-related incidents through the IRF001 Incident/Hazard Report.
- Parish Councils, Clergy and relevant Church Workers will follow the Diocesan PP001 Privacy Policy with respect to the handling of church workers and program participants' personal information.

3) Ensuring it is safe to raise concerns about misconduct and abuse.

- Clergy and Church workers are required to report all safe ministry concerns, including grievances, significant breaches of *Faithfulness in Service* or disclosures, suspicions of child abuse and/or sexual misconduct or any other safety concern. For concerns of abuse and misconduct, report to the externally operated Safe Ministry Helpline to the Directors of Professional Standards, or directly to the Professional Standards (Investigation) Committee (SM009), or the Faithfulness in Service (Code of Conduct) Investigations Committee (SM006).
- Clergy and Church Workers are to commit to a child-centred approach to responding to concerns about a child or group of children who may be at risk of harm.
- Clergy and Church workers are to commit to providing survivors of sexual and/or child abuse by church workers with appropriate care and assistance. The provision of support should be through the Diocesan process of providing pastoral care and assistance for those abused by church workers.

- Clergy and Where a church worker has an allegation of ministry misconduct made against them, the Diocese, with advice from the helpline, will implement protocols including *SM006: Faithfulness in Service Investigation Committee Protocol* and *SM009: Responding to Sexual Misconduct Protocol* to ensure that all parties receive appropriate support, and procedural fairness.

4. Safe Ministry with Child and Young People

In addition to the above commitments, the Diocese commits to:

- a) promoting the participation and empowerment of children and young people by involving them in relation to decisions that impact them, including inviting feedback.
- b) recognising the primary role of parents and caregivers, as well as the role of children, in child protection by engaging caregivers, and inviting feedback as part of the Diocese’s procedures and interactions.
- c) upholding and respecting diverse needs of children and young people, and in particular, by paying attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with a disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Roles and Responsibilities

All Clergy and Church Workers are to comply with this policy

In particular:

Bishop	<p>The Head of Agency, or Church Authority as defined by the Professional Standards Ordinance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oversees and implements Safe Ministry Policy and Protocols at Diocesan level - Licenses & appoints clergy - Licenses church workers - Disciplines clergy and church workers according to Ordinance, Canons and Safe Ministry Protocols - Reports to Government statutory authorities - Where there is a failure to implement or adhere to the Safe Ministry Policy or Protocols the Bishop has the right: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to seek risk management advice - to review any church worker’s safe ministry clearance - to remove any church worker’s clearance
Diocesan Council (DC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carries out relevant functions according to the Canons and Ordinances, including approves all Safe Ministry Policy and protocols for the Diocese - Assigns tasks to office holders to ensure the implementation of this Policy - Ensures office holders have adequate resources for the implementation of the Safe Ministry Policy and Protocols - Appoints members of the Diocesan Tribunal, Professional Standards Committee (PSC), <i>Faithfulness in Service</i> investigations Committee (FISIC) and of the Diocesan Safe Ministry Reference Group

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake audits of staff, volunteers, contractors and third parties to ensure adherence to the Safe Ministry Policy, Protocols and Code of Conduct. - Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of Safe Ministry Policy and Protocols.
Diocesan Safe Ministry Officer (DSMO)	<p>Appointed by the Bishop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides support in the implementation of Safe Ministry Ordinance, Policy and Protocols, including undertaking national register checks, issuing clearance notices, record keeping and monitoring compliance and completion of reviews - Provides administrative support to the Diocesan Professional Standards Committee, Safe Ministry Reference Group, Faithfulness in Service Investigations Committee and to the Bishop in safe ministry matters. - Supports the parishes in matters relevant to safe ministry compliance - Where there is a change to Diocesan requirements for safe ministry clearance due to amendment to legislation, policy or protocol the DSMO will make a determination in each instance as to the urgency of implementing the new requirement. In general, those who have already received clearance, are not expected to resubmit updated clearance paperwork until their three year renewal is due
Diocesan Safe Ministry Reference Group (SMRG)	<p>Appointed by DC comprising both lay and clerical members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writes, reviews and provides recommendations to Diocesan Council in relation to Safe Ministry related Ordinance, Policy, Protocols and training requirements.
Faithfulness in Service Investigations Committee (FISIC)	<p>Appointed by DC comprising both lay and clerical members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implements <i>SM006 Faithfulness in Service Investigations Committee Protocol</i> - Investigates allegations of breaches of the Diocesan Code of Conduct, excluding sexual misconduct
Professional Standards Committee (PSC)	<p>Appointed by DC comprising both lay and clerical members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implements <i>SM009 Protocol for Responding to Information about Sexual Misconduct</i> - Investigates allegations of sexual misconduct by church workers
Director of Professional Standards (DPS)	<p>Appointed by DC</p> <p>Carries out all functions as detailed in the Canons and Ordinances of the Diocese and relevant safe ministry policy and protocols.</p>
Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oversees the implementation of the Safe Ministry Canons, Ordinances and Policies and Protocols at a parish level. - Implementation and review of a Parish Safe Ministry action plan. - Communication of the requirements of Safe Ministry Policy and Protocols with the parish - Providing congregations and visitors with reasonable directions where a person or a group of peoples' health and safety is at risk.

Rector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appoints lay church workers through <i>SM002 Safe Ministry Screening Protocol</i>. - With Parish Council, implements Safe Ministry Policy and Protocols within the parish. - Provides direction and supervision for workers, including establishing any areas of delegation under <i>SM012 Parish Safe Ministry Administrator Protocol</i>.
Parish Safe Ministry Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implements <i>SM012 Parish Safe Ministry Administrator Protocol</i>
Church Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Familiarise themselves and comply with Professional Standards and Safe Ministry related ordinances, Faithfulness in service, the Safe Ministry Policy and Protocols. - Provide an environment that is supportive of all children, young persons and vulnerable people emotional and physical safety. - Report any reasonable belief or incident that a child, young person or vulnerable person safety or welfare is at risk to responsible persons in the organisation. or authorities (such as the police and/or the child protection service). - Fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters.
Congregation members, Visitors and contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comply with all reasonable instructions given by clergy and parish council.

If it is not clear which authority is responsible to implement a particular protocol or part thereof, then the following should be contacted:

- The Diocesan Registrar in relation to:
 - Diocesan property and WHS
 - Diocesan Insurance Policy
- The Bishop’s Office in relation to:
 - All clergy and lay stipendiary ministers.
 - Diocesan roles (such as those serving on Diocesan boards or committees).
 - Culturally and linguistically diverse parishes who may require a modified process, the question should be directed to the Bishop’s Office.
- The Rector or Safe Ministry Helpline In relation to:
 - All other church workers.

Policy Definitions

The definitions in the policy are set out in the Diocesan Code of Conduct: *Faithfulness in Service*.

Government Requirements:

- *The Work Health and Safety Act (2012)*
- *The Work Health and Safety Regulations (2012)*
- *The Care and Protection of Children Act (2007)*
- *The Domestic and Family Violence Act (2007)*
- *Office of the Children’s Commissioner Northern Territory*
- *NT Working with Children Clearance*

Church Requirements:

- *Clergy Appointments Regulation Ordinance*
- *The Safe Ministry to Children Canon (2017)*
- *National Register Canon (2007)*
- *The Offences Canon (1962)*
- *The Diocesan Code of Conduct: Faithfulness in Service (November 2016)*
- *Professional Standards Ordinance (2017)*
- *Clergy Appointment and Regulation Ordinance (2017)*
- *PP001: Diocesan Privacy Policy*
- *Anglican Church of Australia Policy for Safe Ministry in a parish where there is a risk of sexual abuse by a Person of Concern*
- *RI001: Reportable Incidents Policy*

Diocesan Protocols:

- *SM002: Safe Ministry Screening Protocol*
- *SM003: Grievance Protocol*
- *SM006: Faithfulness in Service Investigations Committee Protocol*
- *SM007: Short Term Volunteer Worker Protocol*
- *SM009: Protocol for Responding to Information about Sexual Misconduct*
- *SM012: Parish Safe Ministry Administrator Protocol*

For completion when a document supersedes an existing policy, procedure, or protocol.

VERSION NUMBER OF THIS DOCUMENT	DATE OF PREVIOUS DOCUMENT	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	REASON FOR CHANGE
7.0	June 2022 & Sep 2019	- Safe Ministry to Children’s Canon required changes. - Diocesan Safe Ministry Reference group defined.	- Content of Increased clarity in line with National Principles for Child Safe Organizations - Includes live canons and ordinances as AuthoritativeSM005 now mostly redundant in light of other later-established protocols.
	Diocesan Council DSMO DBM	- Updated responsibilities under SMCC - Policy statements scope was expanded and given further clarity in line with National Principles for Child Safe Organizations. - Updates to comply with 2022 Insurance requirements in relation to Safeguarding policies. - General edits Incorporating still-relevant sections of SM005 in order to void SM005. - General updates and edits	